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Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/160, provides an overview of the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and contains a list of signatories, ratifications or accessions to the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto. In addition, it provides information on the work of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and reporting on the ongoing efforts of Governments towards the ratification and implementation of the Convention. The report also presents an overview of the progress made by the entities of the United Nations system and civil society organizations towards implementation of the Convention.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 67/160, the General Assembly requested that the Secretary-General, at its sixty-ninth session, submit to it a report on the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto.

II. Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto

2. Since the previous report on the status of the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto (A/67/281), and as at 1 July 2014, there were an additional 18 ratifications,[1] 10 accessions,[2] and 5 signatures[3] to the Convention. There have also been an additional 5 ratifications,[4] 6 accessions[5] and 2 signatures[6] to the Optional Protocol.

3. At the date of submission of the present report, there were a total of 147 States parties and 158 signatories to the Convention since its opening for signature on 30 March 2007. The European Union, as a regional organization, also ratified the Convention. There were 82 States parties and 92 signatories to the Optional Protocol. The list of all signatories, ratifications and accessions is contained in the annex to the report.

4. Member States continued to harmonize legislation, policies and institutional frameworks.

5. The General Assembly convened a high-level meeting on disability and development on 23 September 2013 to promote a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond. The meeting resulted in a concise and action-oriented outcome document (resolution 68/3) that supports the aims of the Convention, the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. In this regard, the outcome document contributes to ensuring the inclusion of disability-inclusive policy development and programming at all levels. In tandem with the Convention, the outcome document provides a comprehensive policy framework that guides the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development.

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[1] Albania, Andorra, Barbados, Burundi, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominica, Georgia, Israel, Japan, Malta, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Russian Federation, Singapore and Swaziland.

[2] Afghanistan, Angola, Iraq, Kiribati, Kuwait, State of Palestine, Switzerland, Tuvalu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Zimbabwe.

[3] Bahamas, Chad, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Guinea-Bissau and Singapore.

[4] Andorra, Burundi, Gabon, Malta and Swaziland.

[5] Afghanistan, Angola, Dominica, Palau, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), and Zimbabwe.

[6] Chad and Guinea-Bissau.

III. Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

6. Since the submission of the previous report in August 2012, the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities held three sessions at United Nations Headquarters.

7. The fifth session was held from 12 to 14 September 2012, under the theme "Making the Convention of the Rights count for women and children". Thematic debates during the conference were on: "Technology and accessibility", "Children with disabilities", and "Women with disabilities".

8. The sixth session was held on from 17 to 19 July 2013. At the sixth session, States parties focused on the theme "Ensuring an adequate standard of living: empowerment and participation of persons with disabilities within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" with the subthemes: "Economic empowerment through inclusive social protection and poverty reduction strategies"; "Disability-inclusive development in national, regional and international processes"; and "Community-based rehabilitation and habilitation for an inclusive society".

9. The seventh session was convened from 10 to 12 June 2014. During this most recent session, the thematic discussions were: "Incorporating the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into the post-2015 development agenda"; "Youth with disabilities"; and "National implementation and monitoring". During the session, nine new members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were elected to replace those whose terms are due to expire on 31 December 2014.

10. The Conference adopted the three decisions to strengthen its work and to recommend the allocation of the resources necessary for six meetings over full three day for future sessions (see CRPD/CSP/2014/5).

IV. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

11. Since the submission of the previous report in August 2012, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has held its eighth (17-28 September 2012), ninth (15-19 April 2013), tenth (2-13 September 2013) and eleventh (31 March-11 April 2014) sessions.

12. At its eighth session, the Committee considered the initial reports received from Argentina, China and Hungary. The Committee had received initial reports from nine countries: Brazil, Chile, Kenya, New Zealand, Portugal, Qatar, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine, bringing the total number of reports submitted to 35. During its seventh session, the Committee had decided to devote the years' general discussion to the human rights of women and girls with disabilities. The eighth session was attended by representatives from several United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, regional governing bodies and civil society organizations. Among those were the Council of Europe, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Intellectual Property Organization and civil society organizations, including the International Disability Alliance and Human Rights Watch. The report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on strengthening the

United Nations treaty bodies contained specific proposals for enhancing the accessibility and visibility of treaty bodies at the country level and reaffirmed the intention of the Office of the High Commissioner to make its website more user-friendly and accessible to persons with disabilities.

13. At its ninth session, the Committee considered the initial report received from Paraguay. The Committee adopted lists of issues on the initial reports submitted by Austria, Australia and El Salvador and the forthcoming dialogues with those countries, as well as concluding observations on the initial report of Paraguay. The Committee decided to draft a general comment on women and girls with disabilities as a follow-up to the general discussion on the topic.

14. At its tenth session, the Committee considered the following State reports: Australia, Austria and El Salvador. Furthermore, it adopted lists of issues on the initial reports submitted by Azerbaijan, Costa Rica and Sweden.

15. During the eleventh session, the Committee examined the reports of Azerbaijan, Costa Rica and Sweden. Lists of issues were adopted on the reports from on Belgium, Denmark, Ecuador, Germany, Mexico, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea. The Committee had received 59 reports from States parties to date. The increase in the number of ratifications of the Convention and the Optional Protocol had led to an increase in the Committee's workload. This was addressed in the draft resolution on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, which provides for additional meeting time and resources for capacity-building. The Chair reported on activities that were undertaken since the previous session, which included the high-level meeting on disability and development and the Open Working Group on sustainable development goals. Both meetings highlighted the link between the rights of persons with disabilities and overall social development. Moreover, the Chair participated in several meetings with United Nations officials on mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities. Among the other United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and organizations of persons with disabilities that attended the meeting there was general consensus that there had been significant improvements with regard to the rights of persons with disabilities.

V. Activities undertaken in support of the Convention

16. During the reporting period, the Secretariat received 21 submissions from Governments[7] and 10 from agencies[8] within the United Nations system in response to a note verbale. The following section highlights examples of efforts undertaken

[7] Submissions were received from the following Member States: Australia, Austria, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

[8] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Tourism Organization (WTO).

by Member States, by entities within the United Nations system and by civil society organizations to implement the Convention.

A. Member States

17. Member States discussed in their reports new legislative and policy initiatives as well as national action plans and strategies, addressing the concerns of persons with disabilities. In addition, the topics of accessibility; education; employment; health care; social welfare, community rehabilitation and independent living; abuse and violence; and international development cooperation with regard to persons with disabilities were frequently reported on by Member States.

Legislative and policy initiatives

18. A number of Member States reported legislative and policy measures to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, as set out in the Convention:

(a) Finland reported on its recent process for the ratification of the Convention in 2014;

(b) The Russian Federation initiated amendments to new legislation on social security of persons with disabilities, social protection, non-discrimination, reasonable accommodation and accessibility;

(c) Indonesia is taking a human-rights based approach to develop its legislation to advance a disability-inclusive society and development;

(d) Colombia reported on its new legislation in 2013 to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Kenya is currently reviewing national legislation with a view to strengthening its legal framework in line with the Convention;

(e) Singapore announced new policies to improve accessibility to transportation, preschool education and services, and tax subsidies for those who provide care to persons with disabilities;

(f) Norway increased funding for inclusive education by 15 per cent.

National action plans and strategies

19. A number of Member States reported inclusion of disability as a priority in national development plans, programmes and policies:

(a) Romania reported on issuance of a national strategy to enhance the social inclusion of persons with disabilities;

(b) Mexico recently issued a national development plan for 2014-2018 for inclusion of persons with disabilities in development efforts. Indonesia has identified persons with disabilities as a priority in their draft National Mid-Term Development Plan for 2015-2019 and recently developed a National Action Plan on Disabilities for 2013-2022;

(c) Colombia reported on strengthened efforts to mainstream disability in key public policy areas for early childhood development, family, ageing and old age, gender, conflict victims as well as in health, education, employment, culture, recreation, sport, information, communication and technology policies. In addition,

the Government issued a new National Policy of Disability and Social Inclusion for 2014-2022;

(d) Sweden made efforts to ensure that their local authorities are able to implement the national strategic plan on disability;

(e) Singapore developed an enabling master plan 2012-2016, to assist persons with disabilities across their various life stages to empower them to lead independent lives and contribute to society.

(f) The Philippines formulated a National Plan of Action 2013-2022 to implement the Incheon strategy.[9]

Accessibility

20. Member States underscored the importance of accessibility for persons with disabilities in the outcome document of the High-level Meeting on Disability and Development (resolution 68/3) by highlighting the significance of universal design, the removal of barriers to the physical environment, transportation, information and communications technologies (ICTs), as well as an essential component in humanitarian responses to emergency situations.

21. Many Member States reported on improved accessibility for persons with disabilities:

(a) The Republic of Moldova is implementing measures to improve national infrastructure construction in compliance with international and European accessibility standards;

(b) Australia issued new premises standards, the minimum national standards for accessibility requirements for access and use of buildings by persons with disabilities;

(c) Indonesia improved accessibility for persons with disabilities in public buildings and facilities, including for its parliamentary election;

(d) Jordan reported on its current efforts to improve national building code requirements for persons with disabilities;

(e) Kenya is mainstreaming disability in public service programmes for improving access to public infrastructure and supporting devices;

(f) Romania initiated a national study on accessibility of the physical and ICT environments for persons with disabilities, recommending further investment for improvement;

(g) The Russian Federation reported on its progress for reasonable accommodation by service providers to improve accessibility to transportation and public services and facilities for persons with audiovisual impairments and for wheelchair users;

(h) Singapore announced to reduce the cost of transportation for persons with disabilities;

[9] ESCAP, *Incheon Strategy to Make the Right Real for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific* (Bangkok, November 2012).

(i) The Philippines improved accessibility, encouraging participation of persons with disabilities, with a focus on the rural areas.

Education

22. In paragraph 4(d) of the outcome document of the High-level Meeting on Disability and Development (resolution 68/3), Member States underlined the urgent need to recognize the right to education based on equality and non-discrimination by making primary education accessible, free and compulsory, and available to all children with disabilities on an equal basis with others. Some States reported on measures to improve access to education for persons with disabilities. It was noted by a number of States that children with disabilities continue to demonstrate lower participation in education and face multiple barriers to accessing education, including preschool and primary education:

(a) The Republic of Moldova strengthened efforts to implement its inclusive Education Code and adopted an Inclusive Education Development Programme for 2011-2020, which establishes a policy framework for continuous adaptation of the national education system to respond to the needs of children with disabilities;

(b) Jordan is preparing a five-year plan to improve inclusion of persons with physical, hearing, visual and mild and moderate intellectual disabilities in the educational and learning system.

(c) Norway strengthened efforts to improve access to education for children with disabilities and has increased federal funding for education.

(d) Singapore recently announced subsidy increases to support early intervention programmes for preschool children with disabilities.

Employment

23. In paragraph 4(g) of the outcome document of the high-level meeting in disability and development (resolution 68/3), the General Assembly encouraged Member States in 2013 to ensure equal access to full and productive employment and decent work on an equal basis and without discrimination to persons with disabilities, including by promoting skills development and vocational and entrepreneurial training.

24. Several States reported strengthened efforts to improve access to employment and decent work. States reported innovations in strategies to support the employability and access to employment of persons with disabilities, which build on existing quota-based systems and reasonable accommodation support:

(a) Australia reported the establishment of disability support pension employment incentive pilots and an innovation fund to support the removal of barriers to employment under its national mental health and disability employment strategy;

(b) Kenya is developing a database to record and match the skills of youth with disabilities to the job market. Kenya is also implementing a national development fund for persons with disability to support youth with disabilities to participate in technical and vocational training and to start their own enterprises;

(c) The Republic of Korea highlighted the introduction of a mandatory employment quota system for employers;

(d) Singapore established a dedicated agency to enhance employability and increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Health care

25. In paragraph 4(e) of the outcome document of the High-level Meeting on Disability and Development (resolution 68/3), Member States stressed that primary health care and specialized services should be made available for persons with disabilities. In this regard, a number of States reported health care and service initiatives:

(a) Australia reported on efforts to strengthen the mental health service system including an expansion of youth-friendly mental health services for young people;

(b) Colombia mainstreamed disability in public policies related to health;

(c) The Russian Federation issued policies to ensure people with disabilities have the right to free provision of rehabilitation equipment;

(d) Singapore expanded its national health insurance scheme and included universal coverage for all in 2015.

Social welfare, community rehabilitation and independent living

26. Several States reported efforts to improve social assistance, community rehabilitation and integration and independent living of persons with disabilities:

(a) Jordan recently piloted a group homes project for young men with intellectual disabilities who were previously institutionalized, to promote independent living and employment within communities;

(b) The Republic of Moldova issued a range of regulations and minimum quality standards to support persons with disabilities to live independently and to assist them to reintegrate into society following rehabilitation. The Republic of Moldova also highlighted the implementation of a national integrated social service system that expands community based and specialized social services;

(c) Colombia formulated a national implementation strategy and guidelines for community-based rehabilitation;

(d) The Russian Federation established a coordination mechanism for rehabilitation and social integration of persons with disabilities;

(e) Indonesia and Kenya reported increases in funding for community and family-based care and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities;

(f) Kenya and the Republic of Korea reported on their cash transfer programmes for persons with severe disabilities;

(g) Singapore announced an increase in tax reliefs for family member caring for persons with severe disabilities.

Abuse and violence against persons with disabilities

27. Persons with disabilities are vulnerable to abuse and violence. It was noted in a number of reports that persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities, are more vulnerable to exploitation, violence and abuse. Some States reported specific initiatives to address violence against persons with disabilities:

(a) Australia issued a National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, which is responsive to the identified needs of women and girls with disabilities;

(b) Jordan reported on recent training of national officers in the ministries of education, social development and health on protection of persons with disabilities from abuse and violence and on sexual awareness for persons with disabilities;

(c) Norway recently published a study on violence and abuse of persons with disabilities in close relationships, which pointed to various shortcomings in the current provision of services;

(d) Australia also initiated research on violence against women with disabilities in Cambodia.

International development cooperation

28. Increased efforts are being made with regard to disability-inclusive international development cooperation in line with the outcome document of the High-level Meeting on Disability and Development and in conjunction with the ongoing work relating to a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond. In this context, persons with disabilities should be agents and beneficiaries of international cooperation.

29. A shift towards including disability in development and international cooperation has become more common. Disability mainstreaming in addition to the funding of targeted programmes for persons with disabilities occurs more frequently. Many donor countries stressed the need to incorporate disability in international aid and development programmes:

(a) Australia established a team to work on the integration of disability in aid programmes and recently announced that a new disability-inclusive development strategy would be prepared in 2014;

(b) Austria created a task force on inclusion and highlighted its human rights-based and twin-track-approach to disability in international development programmes;

(c) In Denmark, Strategy for Humanitarian Action 2010-2015, explicitly includes persons with disabilities as a particularly vulnerable and prioritized group;

(d) Norway prioritizes the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities in areas such as education, humanitarian efforts, health and gender equality in its international development cooperation framework;

(e) The Republic of Korea revised its Framework Act on International Development Cooperation in 2013 to include disability as a cross-cutting issue;

(f) Spain incorporated a specific indicator for disabilities in its development database system to enable monitoring of the impact of projects on persons with disabilities;

(g) Sweden established a Platform on Development Cooperation, in March 2014, which identifies persons with disabilities as one of five prioritized groups to receive its aid;

(h) Italy included recommendations from its disability action plan in its development cooperation programming guidelines for 2014-2016. Italy also presented this action plan to member States of the European Union for the harmonization of European Union policies in the field of disability;

(i) Finland continues to promote disability in its international cooperation work through a multitrack approach, which involves a combination of mainstreaming, targeted programmes and the inclusion of disability in multilateral dialogues. The Finnish international cooperation programme also increased funding for disability projects by 3 million euros.

Challenges

30. Although significant progress has been made in a number of areas, further efforts are required for implementation of the Convention in all areas, including: promoting political participation of persons with disabilities; recognizing legal capacity and providing for equal recognition before the law; replacing substitute decision-making paradigms with models that are based on supported decision-making; and interpreting article 12 of the Convention, as recently noted by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its general comment No. 1 (2014) (see CRPD/C/GC/1).

31. Member States also addressed obstacles to the effective implementation of the Convention. For example, many States, at the seventh session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention, recognized a lack of high-quality, sufficiently disaggregated and internationally comparable data on the status of persons with disabilities at the national level. To monitor the implementation of the Convention and the realization of any internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities, and to support evidence-based and responsive policymaking, data need to be strengthened. Several Member States reported efforts to improve their knowledge base on the situation of persons with disabilities.

32. Colombia, Jordan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, and Romania reported a wide range of research activities, including on specific groups of persons with disabilities and the integration of disability in national surveys in line with guidance provided by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, as well as surveys, including the WHO model disability survey. Australia, in this regard, addressed the need to strengthen research on disability through its aid and development programmes in the Asia-Pacific region.

B. United Nations system

33. Over the reporting period, the United Nations system strengthened efforts to support Member States in the implementation of the Convention through technical cooperation, capacity-building and awareness-raising.

34. A significant focus of United Nations entities during the reporting period was on promoting and assisting Member States to build their knowledge on disability. This involved technical cooperation to support the collection and analysis of data and promotion of regional platforms and networks for knowledge-sharing and collective actions. United Nations entities have taken disability-inclusive approaches within their internal programming, planning and strategic frameworks and are responding to the needs of Member States to develop capacity for disability-inclusive development in a wide range of programmes.

Establishing mechanisms to mainstream disability in global programmes

35. Since the previous report of the Secretary General (A/67/281), United Nations entities have continued efforts to promote disability within their respective areas of work. Several agencies are continuing to include disability in programming and technical cooperation activities. Many agencies are also pursuing research and targeted technical cooperation.

36. ILO is developing a strategy and action plan on disability inclusion. The strategy and action plan seek to reinforce disability inclusion as a cross-cutting issue throughout its work.

37. UN-Women issued a new strategic plan for 2014-2017, which refers to women and girls with disabilities as one of the poorest and most excluded groups warranting specific and special attention in the organization's activities. This strategic plan will support the systematic mainstreaming of disability.

38. UNDP focused on strengthening internal technical competencies of United Nations staff in country teams to better respond to and provide technical assistance to Member States within the context of the implementation of the joint United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

39. In follow up to the World Health Assembly resolution on disability in 2011, WHO developed a global disability action plan for 2014-2021, which promotes the removal of barriers and improved access to health services and programmes, strengthened and extended rehabilitation, habilitation, assistive technology, assistance and support services and community-based rehabilitation and strengthened collection of relevant and internationally comparable data on disability.

Promotion of accessibility

40. Accessibility is both a means and the goal for the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in society and development. The United Nations system has improved accessibility to information, materials, meetings and platforms. The Secretariat inaugurated its Accessibly Centre in conjunction with the observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in December 2013.

41. The Interdepartmental Task Force on Accessibility (see A/67/281, paras. 21-23) worked to develop a comprehensive policy on accessibility for the United Nations Secretariat, which was realized with the promulgation of the Secretary-General's bulletin of 19 June 2014 on the employment and accessibility for staff members with disabilities in the United Nations Secretariat (ST/SGB/2014/3). The Secretary-General's bulletin will enable the Organization to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability in the Secretariat through, among others, the adoption of standards and guidelines for the Secretariat, in order to

ensure that staff members with disabilities have access to physical facilities, conferences and services, documentation and information, and professional development, as well as through measures to alleviate other disproportionate disability-related burden on staff with disabilities. Such measures are expected to be taken within existing resources or with additional resources approved for this purpose by the General Assembly.

42. The United Nations system continued efforts to improve accessibility and the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of the work of the Organization. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which served as the secretariat to the high-level meeting on disability and development, together with the Nippon Foundation, collaborated for the production of the outcome document of the high-level meeting in accessible multimedia formats. Efforts are also being made by the Secretariat and United Nations regional commissions to provide sign language, real-time captioning and Braille interpretation services at global, regional and interregional meetings.

43. ESCAP enhanced the accessibility of facilities and services, including progress towards development of an accessibility centre in Bangkok.

44. ITU and UNESCO continue to promote accessibility to information and communications technologies for persons with disabilities. UNESCO developed and launched the Model Policy for Inclusive ICTs in Education for Persons with Disabilities, in February 2014. The Model Policy serves as a practical resource for Governments in developing and implementing national policies. ITU recently released a global report entitled *Universal service funds and digital inclusion for all*, and has continued to promote and facilitate knowledge exchanges on the relevance of ICT accessibility in global and regional events.

Awareness-raising

45. The International Day of Persons with Disabilities was commemorated at United Nations Headquarters and around the world in regional and country-level offices of the United Nations. The Day's theme in 2013 was "Break barriers, open doors: for an inclusive social and development for all", building on the outcome document of the High-Level Meeting on Disability and Development, to further raise awareness of disability and accessibility as a cross-cutting development issue. In observance of the Day, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized a number of events, including discussions, performances and a film screening promoting messages of inclusion for persons with disabilities. The Department also collaborated with the United Nations Foundation and GivingTuesday.org to promote volunteerism for persons with disabilities to fully participate in society and development as beneficiaries and leaders.

46. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs continued to serve as a focal point on disability within the United Nations system in the field of disability. Panel discussions, seminars, expert group meetings and consultations with civil society organizations, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities, were organized by the Department to advance knowledge and understanding on the implementation of the Convention and raise awareness on its normative content. A major focus during the past year involved the disability-inclusive global development agenda, and pursing innovations for disability statistics through the

facilitation of discussions with all stakeholders and in collaboration with the Washington Group on Disability Statistics.

47. The United Nations regional commissions continued to promote ratification and implementation of the Convention and the Optional Protocol. Immediately following the High-level Meeting in September, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela ratified the Convention. In October 2013, ESCWA organized a regional conference on disability to promote enhanced knowledge and policy for the implementation of the Convention in the region. At the end of the conference, participants adopted an outcome document reaffirming the Convention as the guiding framework for the protection, promotion and advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities in the region and outlined steps for its promotion. ESCAP continued to promote the Make the Right Real! campaign in Asia and the Pacific and received endorsement of the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities, at the sixty-ninth session of the ESCAP Commission, in 2013. Since the endorsement, an additional seven countries in the region have ratified the Convention.

48. Awareness-raising activities were also conducted by United Nations system agencies on a wide range of priority issues. A joint United Nations statement[10] on ending violence against women and girls was issued in March 2013, which included a reference to women and girls with disabilities as a particularly vulnerable group. Efforts to incorporate the intersection of gender and disability in international agreements were successfully undertaken.[11] ILO continued to coordinate its Global Business and Disability Network to promote the business case for employment of persons with disabilities. UNESCO successfully promoted improved access to World Heritage sites for persons with disabilities, with site managers at 981 World Heritage properties. ITU is collaborating with the International Paralympic Committee for a global campaign to promote access to services and broadcasting for persons with disabilities by 2016.

Research and technical cooperation for Member States to strengthen the knowledge base on disability

49. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized a number of events and panel discussions to advance evidenced-based policy and practice for disability-inclusive development during the period under review.[12] Most recently, the Department organized an expert group meeting to analyse the current status of disability statistics and make recommendations for action to strengthen data collection efforts to promote evidence-based policy making as a contribution towards the implementation of the outcome document of the High Level Meeting on Disability and Development.

50. The recommendations from the meeting emphasized the urgent need for coordination among United Nations entities to address data gaps and revise methods of data collection, synthesis and reporting, with a view to improving the coverage of topics, timeliness and data comparability taking into account the specific situation

[10] See www.unicef.org/media/media_68116.html.

[11] See the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-eighth session (E/2014/27-E/CN.6/2014/15) and the outcome document of the High-level Meeting on Disability and Development.

[12] See www.un.org/disabilities/.

of persons with disabilities. ESCWA conducted an in-depth study in cooperation with the League of Arab States on disability statistics that gathered qualitative information related to disability in the region. ESCAP reported that Governments in Asia and the Pacific are increasingly aware of the importance of statistics in evidence-based policymaking and reported on improved collection of disability prevalence data in the region. A number of countries, with ILO technical cooperation, have incorporated in national labour force surveys, the set of questions developed by the Washington Group, in accordance with the decisions taken by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

51. United Nations system agencies and the United Nations Partnership for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have been supporting capacity-building of national statistical offices in the design, collection and management of national statistics on the status of persons with disabilities, as well as targeted research and analysis. The Partnership's support has already resulted in the inclusion of disability statistics as a priority issue in the fourth Regional Meeting of Heads of Planning and Heads of Statistics in the Pacific Region and a decision to include disability in the online National Minimum Development Indicator Database of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. The online database will support the standardization and harmonization of disability statistics across Pacific island countries.

Technical cooperation and assistance to promote disability-inclusive development

52. The United Nations system continued to support Member States through technical cooperation during the reporting period. The UNDP-coordinated inter-agency technical cooperation programme of the United Nations Partnership for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provided a first round of funding, with joint projects initiated in 2013 in Costa Rica, Indonesia, Mozambique, the Republic of Moldova, South Africa, State of Palestine, Togo, Tunisia and Ukraine and in various Pacific islands. The Partnership programme will expand in 2014 to cover additional projects.

53. In addition to supporting implementation of the Partnership, ILO carried out a number of technical cooperation projects focused on promoting improved legislation for the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities in employment in Botswana, China, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Viet Nam and Zambia.

54. The UN-Women Trust Fund to end violence against women focused on marginalized groups, including women with disabilities. Projects were implemented to address violence against women with disabilities in Cameroon, Lesotho, Namibia and Nigeria. UN-Women also undertook a number of initiatives to improve the quality of life of women with disabilities in the Republic of Moldova, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uruguay.

55. UNESCO conducted a number of technical cooperation programmes, related to Mongolia. WHO is developing an interactive online training package to support capacity building of managers in community-based rehabilitation centres.

56. The World Tourism Organization updated its 2005 recommendations to incorporate relevant provisions of the Convention and universal design. A *Manual on Accessible Tourism for All: Public-Private Partnerships and Good Practices* was published in March 2014, featuring technical advice for the inclusion of both cultural and natural heritage assets into the accessible tourism value chain.

57. The United Nations system has continued to advance disability-inclusive development approaches, including through technical cooperation to Member States. The United Nations system is improving the coordination and implementation of disability mainstreaming efforts across all programmes and areas of work, including responses to humanitarian and other crises. There is also a space for the United Nations system to focus on technical cooperation such as disability-inclusive finance, access to justice, legal capacity of persons with disabilities and the development of models for supportive decision-making. The promotion of the inclusion of disability as a cross-cutting issue and stand-alone priority in existing and emerging modalities for international technical cooperation could be strengthened. Noting success over the previous reporting period in terms of building the knowledge base on disability, greater efforts to support Member States to institutionalize and harmonize methods for collecting and disaggregating data on the status of persons with disabilities are needed.

C. Civil society organizations

58. Civil society organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities, in particular, continue to be both agents and beneficiaries in the context of the implementation of the Convention at the international, regional and national levels.

59. More than 650 representatives from civil society organizations participated in the seventh session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention, held in June 2014. Numerous civil society organizations took the floor and expressed their opinion on how the Convention could be further implemented by States parties. Forty-two side-events were organized on a number of thematic topics, ranging from discrimination; technology; sports; laws and policies for persons with disabilities; full and effective participation; accessibility; education; women, children and youth with disabilities; rights; regional cooperation; attitudes and stereotypes; disability and innovation; and creating equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, among others. Addressing such a variety of topics calls for attention on how corresponding policies would need to be designed, implemented and monitored for the implementation of the Convention. In addition, two major forums were organized by civil society organizations: a civil society forum and a global forum on disability preceded the seventh session of the Conference of States Parties. The DESA Forum, a multi-stakeholder partnership forum on development and disability, was co-organized by Governments, civil society organizations and the private sector with a view to developing informal networks of new and traditional stakeholders, and held in June 2014. More than 100 participants attended the discussion sessions. The specific focus of the 2014 Forum was disability, disaster risk reduction and resilience and financial inclusion of disability in the context of a disability-inclusive post 2015 development agenda.

Annex

List of signatories, ratifications or accessions to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto, as at 1 July 2014

A. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Afghanistan		18 September 2012*
Albania	22 December 2009	11 February 2013
Algeria	30 March 2007	4 December 2009
Andorra	27 April 2007	11 March 2014
Angola		19 May 2014*
Antigua and Barbuda	30 March 2007	
Argentina	30 March 2007	2 September 2008
Armenia	30 March 2007	22 September 2010
Australia	30 March 2007	17 July 2008
Austria	30 March 2007	26 September 2008
Azerbaijan	9 January 2008	28 January 2009
Bahamas	24 September 2013	
Bahrain	25 June 2007	22 September 2011
Bangladesh	9 May 2007	30 November 2007
Barbados	19 July 2007	27 February 2013
Belgium	30 March 2007	2 July 2009
Belize	9 May 2011	2 June 2011
Benin	8 February 2008	5 July 2012
Bhutan	21 September 2010	
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	13 August 2007	16 November 2009
Bosnia and Herzegovina	29 July 2009	12 March 2010
Brazil	30 March 2007	1 August 2008
Brunei Darussalam	18 December 2007	
Bulgaria	27 September 2007	22 March 2012

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Burkina Faso	23 May 2007	23 July 2009
Burundi	26 April 2007	22 May 2014
Cambodia	1 October 2007	20 December 2012
Cameroon	1 October 2008	
Canada	30 March 2007	11 March 2010
Cape Verde	30 March 2007	10 October 2011
Central African Republic	9 May 2007	
Chad	26 September 2012	
Chile	30 March 2007	29 July 2008
China	30 March 2007	1 August 2008
Colombia	30 March 2007	10 May 2011
Comoros	26 September 2007	
Congo	30 March 2007	
Cook Islands		8 May 2009*
Costa Rica	30 March 2007	1 October 2008
Côte d'Ivoire	7 June 2007	10 January 2014
Croatia	30 March 2007	15 August 2007
Cuba	26 April 2007	6 September 2007
Cyprus	30 March 2007	27 June 2011
Czech Republic	30 March 2007	28 September 2009
Denmark	30 March 2007	24 July 2009
Djibouti		18 June 2012*
Dominica	30 March 2007	1 October 2012
Dominican Republic	30 March 2007	18 August 2009
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	3 July 2013	
Ecuador	30 March 2007	3 April 2008
Egypt	4 April 2007	14 April 2008
El Salvador	30 March 2007	14 December 2007
Estonia	25 September 2007	30 May 2012

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Ethiopia	30 March 2007	7 July 2010
European Union	30 March 2007	23 December 2010
Fiji	2 June 2010	
Finland	30 March 2007	
France	30 March 2007	18 February 2010
Gabon	30 March 2007	1 October 2007
Georgia	10 July 2009	13 March 2014
Germany	30 March 2007	24 February 2009
Ghana	30 March 2007	31 July 2012
Greece	30 March 2007	31 May 2012
Grenada	12 July 2010	
Guatemala	30 March 2007	7 April 2009
Guinea	16 May 2007	8 February 2008
Guinea-Bissau	24 September 2013	
Guyana	11 April 2007	
Haiti		23 July 2009*
Honduras	30 March 2007	14 April 2008
Hungary	30 March 2007	20 July 2007
Iceland	30 March 2007	
India	30 March 2007	1 October 2007
Indonesia	30 March 2007	30 November 2011
Iran (Islamic Republic of)		23 October 2009*
Iraq		20 March 2013
Ireland	30 March 2007	
Israel	30 March 2007	28 September 2012
Italy	30 March 2007	15 May 2009
Jamaica	30 March 2007	30 March 2007
Japan	28 September 2007	20 January 2014
Jordan	30 March 2007	31 March 2008

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Kazakhstan	11 December 2008	
Kenya	30 March 2007	19 May 2008
Kiribati		27 September 2013*
Kuwait		22 August 2013*
Kyrgyzstan	21 September 2011	
Lao People's Democratic Republic	15 January 2008	25 September 2009
Latvia	18 July 2008	1 March 2010
Lebanon	14 June 2007	
Lesotho		2 December 2008*
Liberia	30 March 2007	26 July 2012
Libya	1 May 2008	
Lithuania	30 March 2007	18 August 2010
Luxembourg	30 March 2007	26 September 2011
Madagascar	25 September 2007	
Malawi	27 September 2007	27 August 2009
Malaysia	8 April 2008	19 July 2010
Maldives	2 October 2007	5 April 2010
Mali	15 May 2007	7 April 2008
Malta	30 March 2007	10 October 2012
Mauritania		3 April 2012*
Mauritius	25 September 2007	8 January 2010
Mexico	30 March 2007	17 December 2007
Micronesia (Federated States of)	23 September 2011	
Monaco	23 September 2009	
Mongolia		13 May 2009*
Montenegro	27 September 2007	2 November 2009
Morocco	30 March 2007	8 April 2009
Mozambique	30 March 2007	30 January 2012
Myanmar		7 December 2011*

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Namibia	25 April 2007	4 December 2007
Nauru		27 June 2012*
Nepal	3 January 2008	7 May 2010
Netherlands	30 March 2007	
New Zealand	30 March 2007	25 September 2008
Nicaragua	30 March 2007	7 December 2007
Niger	30 March 2007	24 June 2008
Nigeria	30 March 2007	24 September 2010
Norway	30 March 2007	3 June 2013
Oman	17 March 2008	6 January 2009
Pakistan	25 September 2008	5 July 2011
Palau	20 September 2011	11 June 2013
Panama	30 March 2007	7 August 2007
Papua New Guinea	2 June 2011	26 September 2013
Paraguay	30 March 2007	3 September 2008
Peru	30 March 2007	30 January 2008
Philippines	25 September 2007	15 April 2008
Poland	30 March 2007	25 September 2012
Portugal	30 March 2007	23 September 2009
Qatar	9 July 2007	13 May 2008
Republic of Korea	30 March 2007	11 December 2008
Republic of Moldova	30 March 2007	21 September 2010
Romania	26 September 2007	31 January 2011
Russian Federation	24 September 2008	25 September 2012
Rwanda		15 December 2008*
Saint Lucia	22 September 2011	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		29 October 2010*
San Marino	30 March 2007	22 February 2008
Saudi Arabia		24 June 2008*

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Senegal	25 April 2007	7 September 2010
Serbia	17 December 2007	31 July 2009
Seychelles	30 March 2007	2 October 2009
Sierra Leone	30 March 2007	4 October 2010
Singapore	30 November 2012	18 July 2013
Slovakia	26 September 2007	26 May 2010
Slovenia	30 March 2007	24 April 2008
Solomon Islands	23 September 2008	
South Africa	30 March 2007	30 November 2007
Spain	30 March 2007	3 December 2007
Sri Lanka	30 March 2007	
State of Palestine		2 April 2014*
Sudan	30 March 2007	24 April 2009
Suriname	30 March 2007	
Swaziland	25 September 2007	24 September 2012
Sweden	30 March 2007	15 December 2008
Switzerland		15 April 2014*
Syrian Arab Republic	30 March 2007	10 July 2009
Thailand	30 March 2007	29 July 2008
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	30 March 2007	29 December 2011
Togo	23 September 2008	1 March 2011
Tonga	15 November 2007	
Trinidad and Tobago	27 September 2007	
Tunisia	30 March 2007	2 April 2008
Turkey	30 March 2007	28 September 2009
Turkmenistan		4 September 2008*
Tuvalu		18 December 2013*
Uganda	30 March 2007	25 September 2008
Ukraine	24 September 2008	4 February 2010

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
United Arab Emirates	8 February 2008	19 March 2010
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	30 March 2007	8 June 2009
United Republic of Tanzania	30 March 2007	10 November 2009
United States of America	30 July 2009	
Uruguay	3 April 2007	11 February 2009
Uzbekistan	27 February 2009	
Vanuatu	17 May 2007	23 October 2008
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)		24 September 2013*
Viet Nam	22 October 2007	
Yemen	30 March 2007	26 March 2009
Zambia	9 May 2008	1 February 2010
Zimbabwe		23 September 2013*

* Accession.

B. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Afghanistan		18 September 2012*
Algeria	30 March 2007	
Andorra	27 April 2007	11 March 2014
Angola		19 May 2014*
Antigua and Barbuda	30 March 2007	
Argentina	30 March 2007	2 September 2008
Armenia	30 March 2007	
Australia		21 August 2009*
Austria	30 March 2007	26 September 2008
Azerbaijan	9 January 2008	28 January 2009
Bangladesh		12 May 2008*
Belgium	30 March 2007	2 July 2009
Benin	8 February 2008	5 July 2012
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	13 August 2007	16 November 2009
Bosnia and Herzegovina	29 July 2009	12 March 2010
Brazil	30 March 2007	1 August 2008
Bulgaria	18 December 2008	
Burkina Faso	23 May 2007	23 July 2009
Burundi	26 April 2007	22 May 2014
Cambodia	1 October 2007	
Cameroon	1 October 2008	
Central African Republic	9 May 2007	
Chad	26 September 2012	
Chile	30 March 2007	29 July 2008
Congo	30 March 2007	
Cook Islands		8 May 2009*
Costa Rica	30 March 2007	1 October 2008
Côte d'Ivoire	7 June 2007	

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Croatia	30 March 2007	15 August 2007
Cyprus	30 March 2007	27 June 2011
Czech Republic	30 March 2007	
Djibouti		18 June 2012*
Dominica		1 October 2012*
Dominican Republic	30 March 2007	18 August 2009
Ecuador	30 March 2007	3 April 2008
El Salvador	30 March 2007	14 December 2007
Estonia		30 May 2012*
Fiji	2 June 2010	
Finland	30 March 2007	
France	23 September 2008	18 February 2010
Gabon	25 September 2007	26 June 2014
Georgia	10 July 2009	
Germany	30 March 2007	24 February 2009
Ghana	30 March 2007	31 July 2012
Greece	27 September 2010	31 May 2012
Guatemala	30 March 2007	7 April 2009
Guinea	31 August 2007	8 February 2008
Guinea-Bissau	24 September 2013	
Haiti		23 July 2009*
Honduras	23 August 2007	16 August 2010
Hungary	30 March 2007	20 July 2007
Iceland	30 March 2007	
Italy	30 March 2007	15 May 2009
Jamaica	30 Marcl 2007	
Jordan	30 March 2007	
Kazakhstan	11 December 2008	
Latvia	22 January 2010	31 August 2010
Lebanon	14 June 2007	

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Liberia	30 March 2007	
Lithuania	30 March 2007	18 August 2010
Luxembourg	30 March 2007	26 September 2011
Madagascar	25 September 2007	
Mali	15 May 2007	7 April 2008
Malta	30 March 2007	10 October 2012
Mauritania		3 April 2012*
Mauritius	25 September 2007	
Mexico	30 March 2007	17 December 2007
Mongolia		13 May 2009*
Montenegro	27 September 2007	2 November 2009
Morocco		8 April 2009*
Mozambique		30 January 2012*
Namibia	25 April 2007	4 December 2007
Nepal	3 January 2008	7 May 2010
Nicaragua	21 October 2008	2 February 2010
Niger	2 August 2007	24 June 2008
Nigeria	30 March 2007	24 September 2010
Palau		11 June 2013*
Panama	30 March 2007	7 August 2007
Paraguay	30 March 2007	3 September 2008
Peru	30 March 2007	30 January 2008
Portugal	30 March 2007	23 September 2009
Qatar	9 July 2007	
Romania	25 September 2008	
Rwanda		15 December 2008*
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		29 October 2010*
San Marino	30 March 2007	22 February 2008
Saudi Arabia		24 June 2008*
Senegal	25 April 2007	

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Serbia	17 December 2007	31 July 2009
Seychelles	30 March 2007	
Sierra Leone	30 March 2007	
Slovakia	26 September 2007	26 May 2010
Slovenia	30 March 2007	24 April 2008
Solomon Islands	24 September 2009	
South Africa	30 March 2007	30 November 2007
Spain	30 March 2007	3 December 2007
Sudan		24 April 2009*
Swaziland	25 September 2007	24 September 2012
Sweden	30 March 2007	15 December 2008
Syrian Arab Republic		10 July 2009*
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	29 July 2009	29 December 2011
Togo	23 September 2008	1 March 2011
Tunisia	30 March 2007	2 April 2008
Turkey	28 September 2009	
Turkmenistan		10 November 2010*
Uganda	30 March 2007	25 September 2008
Ukraine	24 September 2008	4 February 2010
United Arab Emirates	12 February 2008	
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	26 February 2009	7 August 2009
United Republic of Tanzania	29 September 2008	10 November 2009
Uruguay		28 October 2011*
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)		24 September 2013*
Yemen	11 April 2007	26 March 2009
Zambia	29 September 2008	
Zimbabwe		23 September 2013*

* Accession.